

# THOUGHTS ON LINGUISTIC STATES

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## PART II

### THE LIMITATIONS OF LINGUISTICISM

#### CHAPTER III THE PROS AND CONS OF A LINGUISTIC STATE

" One State, one language " is a universal feature of almost every State. Examine the constitution of Germany, examine the constitution of France, examine the constitution of Italy, examine the constitution of England, and examine the constitution of the U.S.A. " One State, one language " is the rule.

Wherever there has been a departure from this rule there has been a danger to the State. The illustration of the mixed States are to be found in the old Austrian Empire and the old Turkish Empire. They were blown up because they were multi-lingual States with all that a multi-lingual State means. India cannot escape this fate if it continues to be a conger of mixed States.

The reasons why a unilingual State is stable and a multi-lingual State unstable are quite obvious. A State is built on fellow feeling. What is this fellow-feeling ? To state briefly it is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. This feeling is a double-edged feeling. It is at once a feeling of fellowship for ones own kith and kin and anti-fellowship for those who are not one's own kith and kin. It is a feeling of " consciousness of kind " which on the one hand, binds together those who have it so strongly that it over-rides all differences arising out of economic conflicts or social gradations and, on the other, severs them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to any other group.

The existence of this fellow-feeling is the foundation of a stable and democratic State.

This is one reason why a linguistic State is so essential. But there are other reasons why a State should be unilingual. There are two other reasons why the rule " one State, one language " is necessary.

One reason is that democracy cannot work without friction unless there is fellow-feeling among those who constitute the State. Faction fights for leadership and discrimination in administration are factors ever present in a mixed State and are incompatible with democracy.

The present State of Bombay is the best illustration of the failure of

democracy in a mixed State. I am amazed at the suggestion made by the States Reorganisation Commission that the present Bombay State should be continued as it is to enable us to gain experience of how a mixed State flourishes. With Bombay as a mixed State for the last 20 years, with the intense enmity between the Maharashtrians and Gujaratis, only a thoughtless or an absent-minded person could put forth such a senseless proposal. The former State of Madras is another illustration of the failure of democracy in a mixed State. The formation of a mixed State of United India and the compulsory division of India into India and Pakistan are other illustrations of the impossibility of having democracy in a mixed State.

Another reason why it is necessary to adopt the rule of "one State, one language" is that it is the only solvent to racial and cultural conflicts.

Why do Tamils hate Andhras and Andhras hate Tamils? Why do Andhras in Hyderabad hate Maharashtrians and Maharashtrians hate Andhras? Why do Gujaratis hate Maharashtrians and Maharashtrians hate Gujaratis? The answer is very simple. It is not because there is any natural antipathy between the two. The hatred is due to the fact that they are put in juxtaposition and forced to take part in a common cycle of participation, such as Government. There is no other answer.

So long as this enforced juxtaposition remains, there will be no peace between the two.

There will be people who would cite the cases of Canada, Switzerland and South Africa. It is true that these cases of bilingual States exist. But it must not be forgotten that the genius of India is quite different from the genius of Canada, Switzerland and South Africa. The genius of India is to divide—the genius of Switzerland, South Africa and Canada is to unite.

The fact that they have been held together up till now is not in the natural course of things. It is due to the fact that both of them are bound by the Congress discipline. But how long is the Congress going to last? The Congress is Pandit Nehru and Pandit Nehru is Congress. But is Pandit Nehru immortal? Any one who applies his mind to these questions will realise that the Congress will not last till the sun and the moon. It must one day come to an end. It might come to an end even before the next election. When this happens the State of Bombay will find itself engaged in civil war and not in carrying on administration.

We therefore want linguistic States for two reasons. To make easy the way to democracy and to remove racial and cultural tension.

In seeking to create linguistic States India is treading the right road. It is the road which all States have followed. In the case of other linguistic States they have been so, from the very beginning. In the case of India she has to put

herself in the reverse gear to reach the goal. But the road she proposes to travel is well-tried road. It is a road which is followed by other States.

Having stated the advantages of a linguistic State I must also set out the dangers of a linguistic State.

A linguistic State with its regional language as its official language may easily develop into an independent nationality. The road between an independent nationality and an independent State is very narrow. If this happens, India will cease to be Modern India we have and will become the medieval India consisting of a variety of States indulging in rivalry and warfare.

This danger is of course inherent in the creation of linguistic States. There is equal danger in not having linguistic States. The former danger a wise and firm statesman can avert. But the dangers of a mixed State are greater and beyond the control of a statesman however eminent.

How can this danger be met ? The only way I can think of meeting the danger is to provide in the Constitution that the regional language shall not be the official language of the State. The official language of the State shall be Hindi and until India becomes fit for this purpose English. Will Indians accept this ? If they do not, linguistic States may easily become a peril.

One language can unite people. Two languages are sure to divide people. This is an inexorable law. Culture is conserved by language. Since Indians wish to unite and develop a common culture it is the bounden duty of all Indians to own up Hindi as their language.

Any Indian who does not accept this proposal as part and parcel of a linguistic State has no right to be an Indian. He may be a hundred per cent Maharashtrian, a hundred per cent Tamil or a hundred per cent Gujarathi, but he cannot be an Indian in the real sense of the word except in a geographical sense. If my suggestion is not accepted India will then cease to be India. It will be a collection of different nationalities engaged in rivalries and wars against one another.

God seems to have laid a heavy curse on India and Indians, saying ' Ye Indians ye shall always remain divided and ye shall always be slaves ! '

I was glad that India was separated from Pakistan. I was the philosopher, so to say, of Pakistan. I advocated partition because I felt that it was only by partition that Hindus would not only be independent but free. If India and Pakistan had remained united in one State Hindus though independent would have been at the mercy of the Muslims. A merely independent India would not have been a free India from the point of view of the Hindus. It would have been a Government of one country by two nations and of these two the Muslims without question would have been the ruling race notwithstanding Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh. When the partition took place I felt that God was

willing to lift his curse and let India be one, great and prosperous. But I fear that the curse may fall again. For I find that those who are advocating linguistic States have at heart the ideal of making the regional language their official language.

This will be a death knell to the idea of a United India. With regional languages as official languages the ideal to make India one United country and to make Indians, Indians first and Indians last, will vanish. I can do no more than to suggest a way out. It is for Indians to consider it.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **MUST THERE BE ONE STATE FOR ONE LANGUAGE ?**

##### **What does a linguistic State mean ?**

It can mean one of two things. It can mean that all people speaking one language must be brought under the jurisdiction of one State. It can also mean that people speaking one language may be grouped under many States provided each State has under its jurisdiction people who are speaking one language. Which is the correct interpretation ?

The Commission took the view that the creation of one single State for all people speaking one and the same language was the only rule to be observed.

Let the reader have a look at map No. 1. He will at once note the disparity between the Northern and Southern States. This disparity is tremendous. It will be impossible for the small States to bear the weight of the big States.

How dangerous this disparity is, the Commission has not realised. Such disparity no doubt exists in the United States. But the mischief it might cause has been prevented by the provisions in the Constitution of the United States.

One such safeguard in the Constitution of the United States has been referred to by Mr. Pannikar in his dissenting minute to the Report (See Table No. 2).

I give below the following extract from his minute

"I consider it essential for the successful working of a federation that the units should be fairly evenly balanced. Too great a disparity is likely to create not only suspicion and resentment but generate forces likely to undermine the federal structure itself and thereby be a danger to the unity of the country. This is clearly recognised everywhere. In most federal constitutions, though wide variation exists in respect of the population and resources of the unit, care is taken to limit the influence and authority of the larger States. Thus in the United States of America, for example, though the States are of varying population and resources and the State of New York has many times the

population, say of Nevada, the constitution provides for equal representation of every State in the Senate."

On this point Mr. Pannikar also refers to the Soviet Union and old Germany. This is what he says :

" In the Soviet Union also, in which great Russia has a larger population than most other units of the Federation taken together, representation in the House of Nationalities is weighed against her so that the other units of the Federation may not be dominated by the larger unit. In the Bismarckian Reich again, though Prussia had a dominant position from the point of view of population, she was given less representation in the *Reichsrat* or the house representing the states than she was entitled to (less than one-third) and the permanent presidency of that body was vested in Bavaria, clearly demonstrating that even here—where there was concentration of political, military and economic power in one State—it was considered necessary, in the interest of the union, to give weightage to the smaller units and also to reduce Prussia to the position of minority in the *Reichsrat*, States Council, which enjoyed greater powers than the *Reichstag* or the House of the People."

Mr. Pannikar has however not mentioned one other safeguard in the Constitution of the United States against the evils of disparity. In our Constitution the two Houses are not co-equal in authority. But the position in the Constitution of the United States is quite different. In the U.S.A. the two Houses are co-equal in authority. Even for money bills the consent of the Senate is necessary. This is not so in India. This makes a great difference to the disparity in the population.

This disparity in the population and power between the States is sure to plague the country. To provide a remedy against it is most essential.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE NORTH VERSUS THE SOUTH**

What the Commission has created is not a mere disparity between the States by leaving U.P. and Bihar as they are, by adding to them a new and a bigger Madhya Pradesh with Rajasthan it creates a new problem of North *versus* South.

The North is Hindi speaking. The South is non-Hindi speaking. Most people do not know what is the size of the Hindi-speaking population. It is as much as 48 per cent of the total population of India. Fixing one's eye on this fact one cannot fail to say that the Commission's effort will result in the consolidation of the North and the balkanisation of the South.

Can the South tolerate the dominance of the North?

It may now not be a breach of a secret if I revealed to the public what

happened in the Congress Party meeting when the Draft Constitution of India was being considered, on the issue of adopting Hindi as the national language. There was no article which proved more controversial than Article 115 which deals with the question. No article produced more opposition. No article, more heat. After a prolonged discussion when the question was put, the vote was 78 against 78. The tie could not be resolved. After a long time when the question was put to the Party meeting the result was 77 against 78 for Hindi. Hindi won its place as a national language by one vote. I am stating these facts from my personal knowledge. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee I had naturally entry to the Congress Party enclosure.

These facts reveal how much the South dislikes the North. This dislike may grow into hatred if the North remains consolidated and the South becomes disintegrated and if the North continues to exercise a disproportionate influence on the politics of India (See Map 1).

To allow one State to have such preponderating influence in the Centre is a dangerous thing.

Mr. Pannikar has referred to this aspect of the case. In his dissenting minute he says:

"The consequence of the present imbalance, caused by the denial of the federal principal of equality of units, has been to create feelings of distrust and resentment in all the States outside Uttar Pradesh. Not only in the Southern States but also in the Punjab, Bengal and elsewhere the view was generally expressed before the Commission that the present structure of government led to the dominance of Uttar Pradesh in all-India matters. The existence of this feeling will hardly be denied by anyone. That it will be a danger to our unity, if such feelings are allowed to exist and remedies are not sought and found now, will also not be denied."

There is a vast difference between the North and the South. The North is conservative. The South is progressive. The North is superstitious, the South is rational. The South is educationally forward, the North is educationally backward. The culture of the South is modern. The culture of the North is ancient.

Did not Prime Minister Nehru on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1947 sit at the Yajna performed by the Brahmins of Benares to celebrate the event of a Brahmin becoming the first Prime Minister of free and independent India and wear the Raja Danda given to him by these Brahmins and drink the water of the Ganges brought by them ?

How many women have been forced to go Sati in recent days and immolate themselves on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. Did not the President recently go to Benares and worship the Brahmins, washed their toes and

drank the water ?

The North still has its Satis, its Nanga Sadhus. What havoc the Nanga Sadhus made at the last Hardwar Fair! Did anyone in U.P. protest against it ?

How can the rule of the North be tolerated by the South ? Already there signs of the South wanting to break away from the North.

Mr. Rajagopalachari has made a statement on the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission which has appeared in the *Times of India* of the 27<sup>th</sup> November. 1955. This is what he says :

" If it is impossible to put the States Reorganisation Schemes in cold storage for the next 15 years, the only alternative is for the Centre to govern India as a unitary state and deal with district officers and district boards directly, with regional commissioners' supervision.

" It would be utterly wrong to fritter away national energy in dispute over boundaries and divisions conceived in the drawing room and not on the background of conditions that have resulted historically.

" Apart from the general convictions of mine, I feel that a large southern State is absolutely essential for preserving the political significance of that part of the country. To cut the South up into Tamil, Malayalam and other small States will result only in complete insignificance of everybody and, in the net result, India as a whole will be the poorer."

Mr. Rajagopalachari has not expressed himself fully. He did do so fully and openly to me when he was the Head of the State and I was the Law Minister in charge of drafting the constitution. I went to Mr. Rajagopalachari for my usual interview which was the practice of the day. At one such interview Mr. Rajagopalachari, referring to the sort of constitution which the Constituent Assembly was making, said to me, "You are committing a great mistake. One federation for the whole of India with equal representation for all areas will not work. In such a federation the Prime Minister and President of India will always be from the Hindi speaking area. You should have two Federations, one Federation of the North and one Federation of the South and a Confederation of the North and the South with three subjects for the Confederation to legislate upon and equal representation for both the federations."

These are the real thoughts of Mr. Rajagopalachari. They came to me as a revelation coming as they did from the innermost heart of a Congressman. I now regard Mr. Rajagopalachari as a prophet predicting the break-up of India into the North and the South. We must do everything to falsify Mr. Rajagopalachari's prophecy.

It must not be forgotten that there was a civil war in the U.S.A. between the North and the South. There may also be a civil war between the North and the South in India. Time will supply many grounds for such a conflict. It must not

be forgotten that there is a vast cultural difference between the North and the South and cultural differences are very combustible.

In creating this consolidation of the North and balkanisation of the South the Commission did not realise that they were dealing with a political and not a merely linguistic problem.

It would be most unstatesman like not to take steps right now to prevent such a thing happening. What is the remedy ?

[Contents](#)

[Part III](#)